

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00

SP-02 L-03 H-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OMB-01

TRSE-00 DODE-00 EAE-00 CAB-02 COME-00 /040 W

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3668

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1741

FOR DEP ASST SEC OAKLEY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, EAID

SUBJ: PROPOSED AID TO BURMA TO IMPORVE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

REF: (A) STATE 132289, (B) RANGOON A-37, (C) STATE 099236,

(D) RANGOON 1050, (E) STATE 070086, (F) RANGOON 0863,

(G) STATE 059429, (H) RANGOON 0705, (I) STATE 044102,

(J) RANGOON 0503, (K) RANGOON 1249

SUMMARY

EMBASSY ASKS THE DEPARTMENT TO RECONSIDER ITS POSITION ON U.S. ASSISTANCE TO BURMA FOR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL. THE PROPOSED AID IS IN THE DIRECT INTEREST OF THE U.S. AS IT WOULD ENHANCE THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE TRAVELING PUBLIC. THE SAME BENEFIT COULD NOT BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE "LOW KEYED EXPRESSION OF CONCERN" SUGGESTED BY THE DEPARTMENT. ADDITIONALLY, WE WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION OF APPARENT DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN POSITIONS IMPLIED IN REFTEL AND EXISTING POLICY GUIDELINES REGARDING ASSISTANCE FOR BURMA. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY REQUESTS THAT DEPARTMENT RECONSIDER ITS POSITION ON U.S. ASSISTANCE TO BURMA FOR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL. THE AIR TAFFIC CONTROL SITUATION IN BURMA OFFERS A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER
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FOR AMERICAN (AND OTHER) TRAVELERS WHO MUST OVERFLY THIS COUNTRY. IF NO PROGRAM EXISTS UNDER WHICH ASSISTANCE TO UPGRADE THE BURMESE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SYSTEM COULD BE CONSIDERED, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE IN THE U.S. INTEREST TO CREATE SUCH A PROGRAM. IT IS TRUE THAT AIR SAFETY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS JURISDICTION OVER THAT SPACE, JUST AS THE IMPROVEMENT OF

LIVING CONDITIONS AND ACCESS TO BASIC NECESSITIES SHOULD ALSO BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY GOVERNMENT TOWARD ITS CITIZENS; HOWEVER, WHEN A GOVERNMENT LACKS THE RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY TO MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, MERE EXHORTATIONS ARE NOT GOING TO CAUSE IT TO DO SO.

2. ADDITIONALLY, WE DISCERN IN THE DEPARTMENT'S REPLY CERTAIN APPARENT DIFFERENCES FROM WHAT WE HAVE HITHERTO REGARDED AS AGREED U.S. POLICY ON AID TO BURMA. SPECIFICALLY:

A. PARA 2 REFTTEL A INDICATES THAT THE PRIORITY OBJECTIVES OF ANY BILATERAL AID PROGRM WOULD BE: (1) TO IMPROVE LIVING CONDITIONS OR (2) TO PROMOTE SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN BASIC NECESSITIES, NOT, AS WE HAVE ASSUMED, (1) TO ASSIST IN BURMA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SO THAT IT MAY BECOME A MORE PRODUCTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE REGIONAL AND WORLD ECONOMIES, OR (2) TO FURTHER A PARTICULAR INTEREST OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT OR ITS CITIZENS (CF. REF D).

B. DOES THE REJECTION OF THIS PROJECT REPRESENT A CHANGE IN WHAT WE HAD CONSIDERED OUR GENERAL POSTURE ON AID TO BURMA, WHEREBY WE WOULD CONSIDER, IN ADDITION TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, OCCASIONAL WORTHY SMALL-SCALE PROPOSALS, WHILE DEFERRING MAJOR AID COMMITMENTS (E.G., A "PLEDGE" WITHIN THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP FRAMEWORK--ASSUMING THE GROUP REACHES THE PLEDGING STAGE) UNTIL SATISFIED THAT THE PROPOSED INVESTMENT WOULD BE FULLY PRODUCTIVE IN FURTHERANCE OF OUR LONG-RUN PURPOSES?

C. WE WERE NOT UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT A FORMAL REQUEST WAS A SINE QUA NON FOR AID TO BURMA, DESPITE THE APPARENT PRECEDENT OF THE POSITION TAKEN ON THE HIGHWAYS PROJECT. THE
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BURMESE HAVE A STRONG INHIBITION AGAINST FORMALLY REQUESTING AID, FOR ONE THING, AND INSISTENCE UPON A FORMAL AND UNSTIMULATED REQUEST AS A PRECONDITION WOULD LIMIT OUR FLEXIBILITY IN THE USE OF AID TO PROMOTE PARTICULAR INTERESTS, SUCH AS THAT IN NARCOTICS CONTROL.

3. WE REALIZE THAT THE ISSUE OF AID TO BURMA HAS NOT BEEN CONSIDERED IN DETAIL, AND WE RAISE THE ABOVE POINTS IN HOPE THAT A FRANK DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE DEPARTMENT MAY PALY A CONSTRUCTIVE PART IN THE POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS. WE WOULD THEREFORE WELCOME THE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON THE POINTS WE HAVE RAISED.

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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